

# Reading Cultural Council

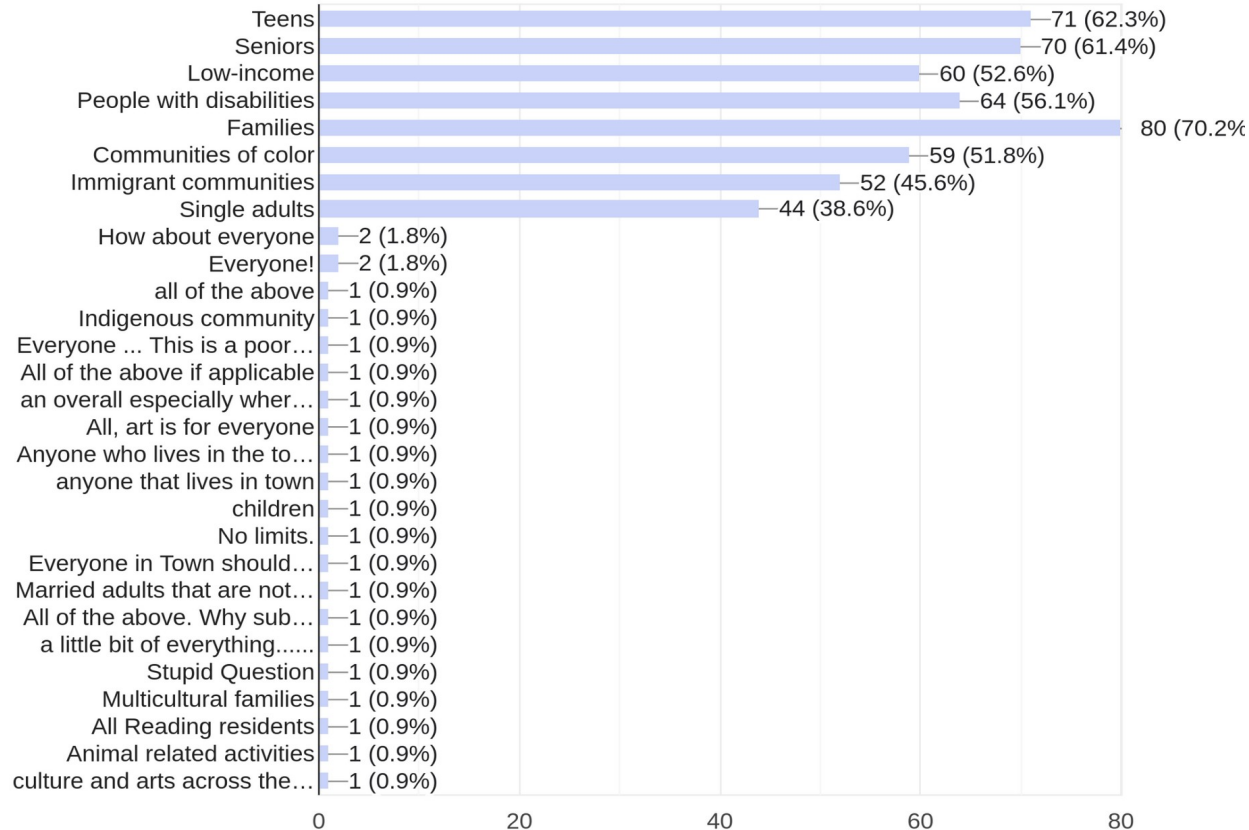
**Annual Survey Results for FY 2022**  
**Survey Ran April 7 to May 30, 2022**  
**118 Responses**

# Executive Summary

- The survey was open from April 7, 2022 to May 30, 2021 – 8 weeks
- We received 118 responses.
- The most cited sources for the awareness of cultural events came from Facebook Events, Friends, Reading Patch, Reading Post and the Library.
- The Reading Porch Fest was the most attended event, followed by the Downtown Reading Art Walk.
- The most common strategies used by attendees for dealing with the pandemic were attending fewer events or not attending at all. Over half of the respondents reported that they had attended fewer or none of the funded events.
- Event organizers reported 31.3% had no impact from Covid-19, 18.8% were changed to a virtual event, and 12.5% were rescheduled. Only 17.2% reported that they had to cancel.
- 28 new contacts were added to the mailing list.
- Detailed reports for each of the questions are provided on the following slides.

Which population segments do you think Cultural Council should be addressing regarding culture and arts in our community? Please check all that apply.

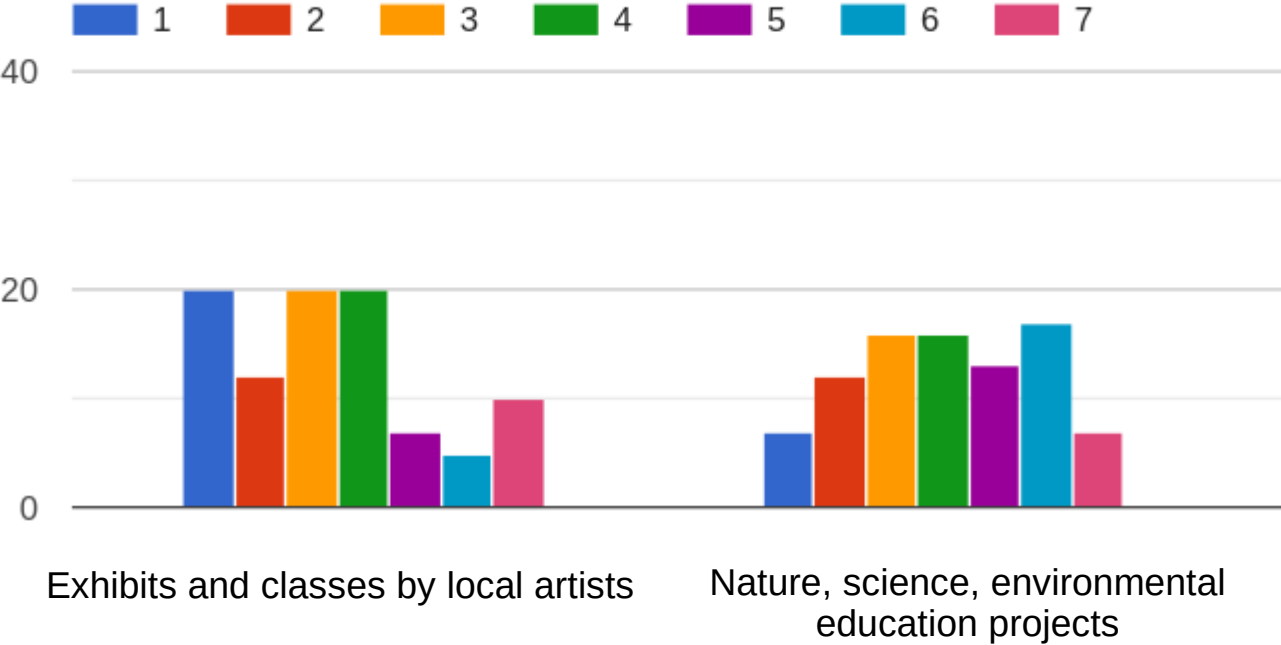
114 responses



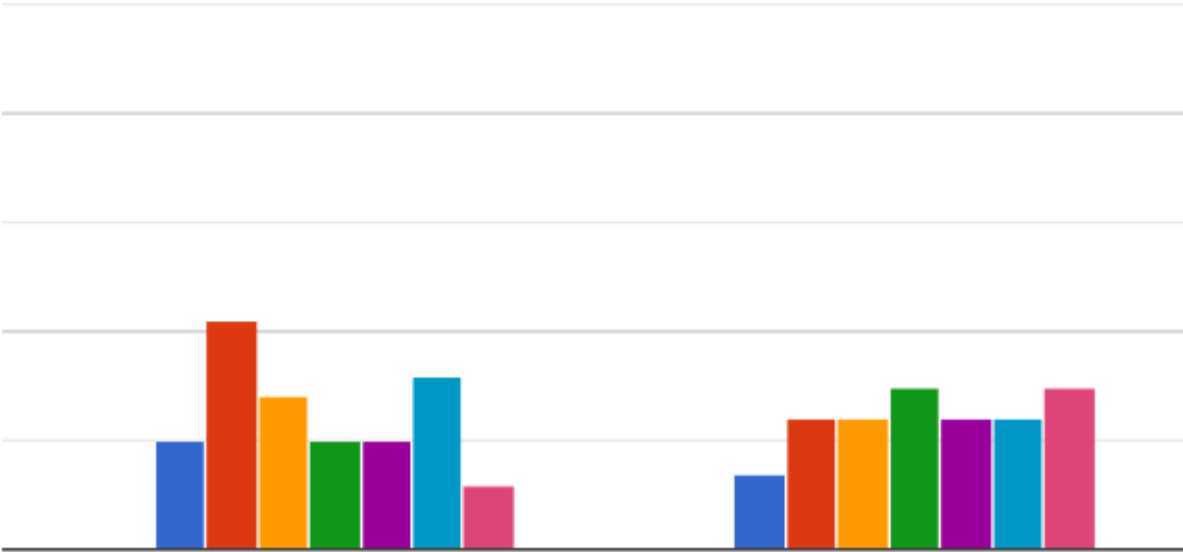
**Which population segments do you think the Cultural Council should be addressing regarding culture and arts in our community? Additional Comments.**

- All of the above if applicable
- children
- Animal related activities
- an overall especially where different "groups" can learn together
- culture and arts across the spectrum
- Multicultural families
- All of the above. Why subdivide people?
- Everyone!
- a little bit of everything.....
- Everyone!
- all of the above
- Everyone in Town should benefit.....no boundaries or special interests
- Married adults that are not seniors
- No limits.
- All Reading residents
- anyone that lives in town
- How about everyone
- Anyone who lives in the town- we do a great job with families,
- All, art is for everyone
- Everyone ... This is a poor question but thank you for doing the survey.
- Stupid Question

Please rank the most important priorities that the Council should consider. (1 of 4)



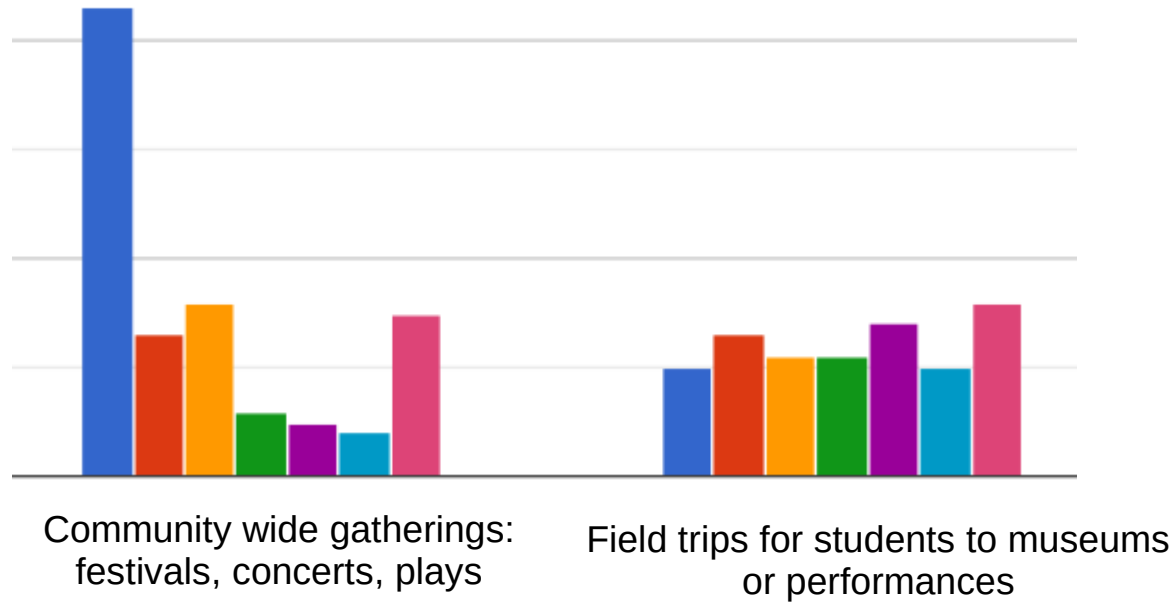
Please rank the most important priorities that the Council should consider. (2 of 4)



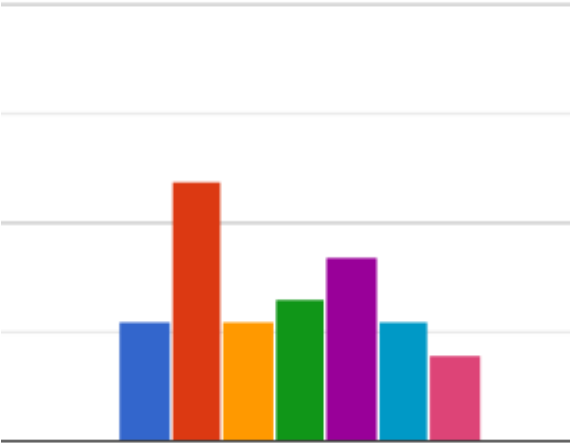
Arts education in the schools

Restoration or preservation projects

**Please rank the most important priorities that the Council should consider. (3 of 4)**



Please rank the most important priorities that the Council should consider. (4 of 4)



Projects celebrating local history,  
cultural diversity



**If your preferred activities do not appear in the previous list, please tell us how you would like the Cultural Council to prioritize our funding. (1 of 2)**

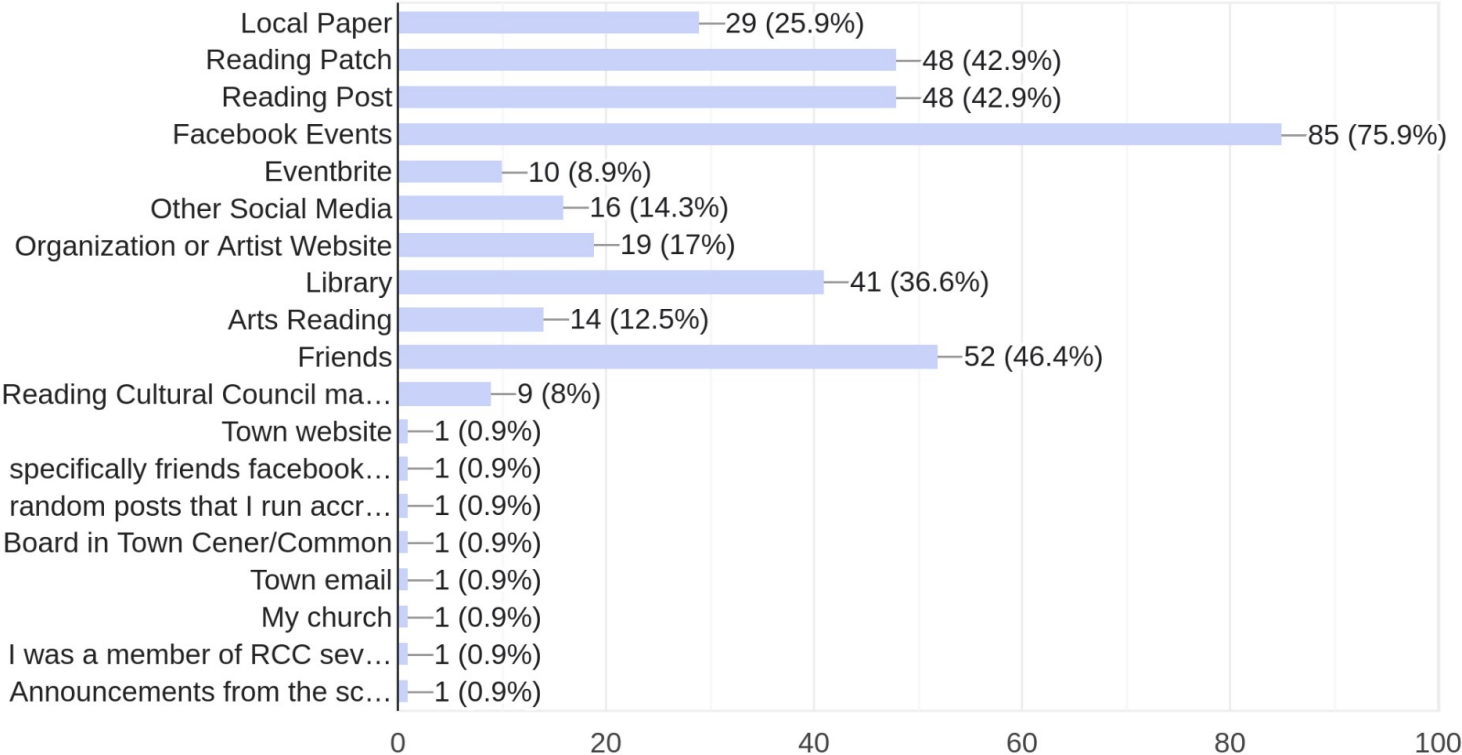
- Actually I didn't like the ranking. I think that the merit of the proposals should matter most.
- Community nonprofit arts organizations
- uneasy responding to previous as ranking order is not clarified
- celebrate the local.....perhaps 'historical house tours '
- schools are supported by PTO's. Community based programs would be better
- events celebrating reading history, events focused on writing, events that take place in town
- A social media page that highlights the grants
- Concerts in the park
- Prioritize funding to reading residents requesting and providing entertainment to and for reading
- can't prioritize from your grid as it doesn't tell which # makes it more or less important

**If your preferred activities do not appear in the previous list, please tell us how you would like the Cultural Council to prioritize our funding. (2 of 2)**

- I believe school projects are very important but that priority should lay on the schools, pto like they have been. This should be for community funding
- Park pop up art activities
- A general comment that I do not think nature, science, or restoration/preservation should be the domain of the cultural council, because we already have groups, boards, and committees that do that. The school budget covers a lot of arts education in the schools, and we have, especially at the middle and high schools, outstanding music, drama, and art programs. To me, sponsoring more community wide events is something that is lacking.
- Non-woke, non-Marxist, non-feminist/misandrism, non-heterophobic.
- Field trips for elementary students to local historical buildings and nature walks
- Organized trips for students, singles, families and seniors to local concerts, plays, museum exhibits, etc
- watch the calendar / people use 3 day weekends now so events should be scheduled after school or early evenings during the week ...

How do you find out about local cultural activities that interest you? Please check all that apply and specify any additional resources that you use.

112 responses



**How do you find out about local cultural activities that interest you? Additional comments.**

- Town Website
- specifically friends facebook posts not event listings and WOM
- random posts that I run accross
- Board in Town Cener/Common
- Town email
- My church
- I was a member of RCC several years ago..... and would be very interested in being reinvolved
- Announcements from the schools

## **What can the Cultural Council do to better promote the cultural activities in Reading? (1 of 5)**

- Promote orgs. You fund
- Continue to have schools include announcement in their weekly updates. Put on community calendar via RCTV on screen, website, and FB page.
- I never knew there was a cultural council so...
- sponsor a website with monthly events
- Can't think of anything at present.
- IDk
- A one page newsletter email blast or insert in electric or water bills Promoting all of the organizations that the cultural Council donates to with the title short description and dates. You could also choose to include other organizations that are relevant as well.
- More visvibility
- More social media presence
- a weekly or monthly email newsletter

## **What can the Cultural Council do to better promote the cultural activities in Reading? (2 of 5)**

- email lists, cultural council seasonal brochure (could be sent through an email and available on your FB page and website) general lawn sign advertising the Cultural Council website and Facebook page.
- Social media
- Include in town information that comes with the water bill.
- Does the CC use the town website?
- Use US Mail
- I don't know enough about the culture to answer.
- more publicity..... mailings???
- Word of mouth
- More on-line visibility
- I think that making sure that there's adequate notice ahead of time of events is always helpful.

## **What can the Cultural Council do to better promote the cultural activities in Reading? (3 of 5)**

- It is not well publicized. I read the patch and the post every couple of weeks. I look at the town, event brite and the library web sites about once a month. I don't recall seeing calls for applications or invitations to events that got grants (except for the art walk which was well publicized)
- more & better signage at different points in town. for example down at the train station, near the post office, near bagel world
- Continue to improve communication through various vehicles (social media, postings, use of the logo, etc.
- Sign on the Common, Facebook Page, Chamber of Commerce
- Public displays
- Signs at Calaresos
- Work with Reading Arts to promote culture in Reading
- Organizations that put on cultural events have to do a better job of publicity by developing email and social media "mailing" lists and using the available media like Reading Patch.

## **What can the Cultural Council do to better promote the cultural activities in Reading? (4 of 5)**

- Community message via email to those who subscribe to be included
- hard answer with so many platforms, personally Facebook and now that I know it exists, your facebook page and/or an email list
- Posting on local community Facebook groups.
- Emails via the town email system, towns website
- Social media presence improvement
- Email or Facebook group if there isn't one?
- Post on FB Parents Network
- Flyer postings downtown and in local stores
- Get your events onto the town website calendar if they are not there already. More partnering with local businesses to help co-promote events. More Facebook notifications.
- Stop pandering to minorities

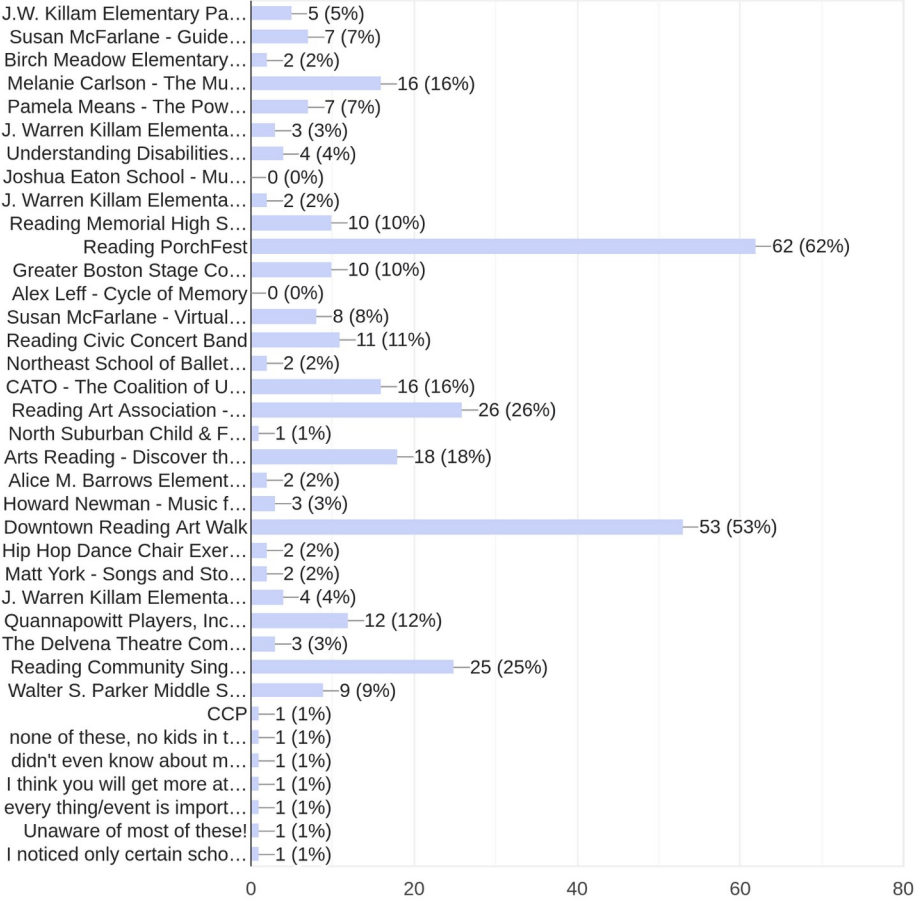


## **What can the Cultural Council do to better promote the cultural activities in Reading? (5 of 5)**

- Put in school newsletter and the town manager's posts
- Signs on the doors of the two Reading Starbucks. Have Starbucks and home depot promote town events with flyers and signs.
- Define what they are ...
- Use popular social media
- Reach out to artists who provide a diverse perspective.
- Engage more with families with kids
- Advertise perhaps on the town center display board
- More even promotions. Reading the list in the next questions, I only ever heard of like 4 or 5 events out of 30 listed.
- have a spot downtown where musicians can perform in the street around the downtown area, have a spot where kids and adults can show their art work, stay away from the political side promote fun and entertainment...Have one of the developers ruining our town with high rise rental units donate a space for showing artwork and make it for sale . So many people need a break today create cultural entrepreneurs.

The Cultural Council has supported 30 events in the 2021-2022 season. Which of the following events have you or your family attended or are planning to attend or are interested in that are not in the list.

100 responses

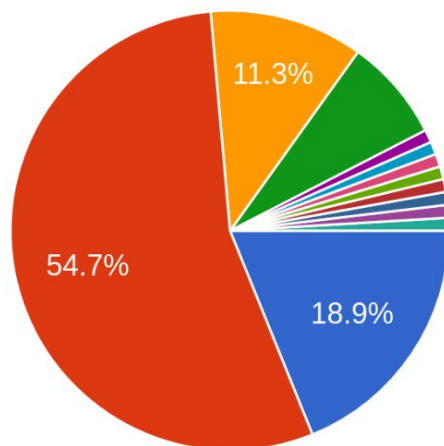


**The Cultural Council has supported 30 events in the 2021-2022 season. Which of the following events have you or your family attended or are planning on attending? Additional Comments**

- CCP
- none of these, no kids in the school and most indoor activities were mask mandated so i was unable to attend
- I noticed only certain schools parts of the town are represented.
- every thing/event is important. don't believe that I was aware of events
- didn't even know about most of these-RCS in the past but not this year
- Unaware of most of these!

As an attendee of cultural events, how has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted your attendance of the cultural arts programs?

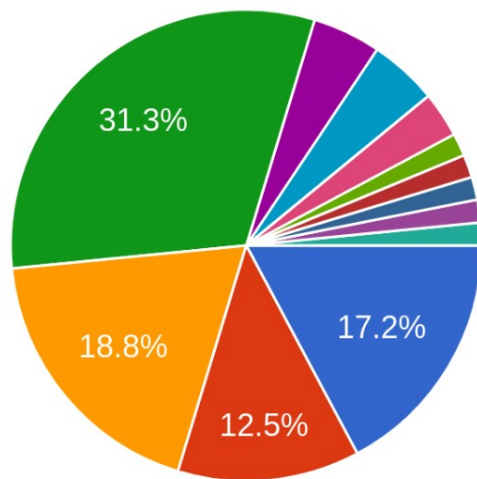
106 responses



- Attended none
- Attended fewer
- Normal attendance
- Attended virtual events
- I would go if I was invited
- Moved here during the pandemic.
- limited them
- Outdoors only
- No change
- Mostly outside events
- didn't realize that it was still functioning. ng.
- --I have trouble driving at night.
- get over it, it's over

# As a cultural organization and/or artist, how has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted your delivery of cultural arts programs?

64 responses



- Canceled
- Rescheduled
- Changed to a virtual event
- No impact
- N/a
- N/A
- Does not apply
- Artwalk was initially rescheduled a few...
- Not relevant
- Not Applicable
- both canceled and rescheduled performances
- Artwalk was initially rescheduled a few times, but we still held our event later in the year (which turns out to be a better time as two townwide events are also held). The pandemic made it a bit trick...

**The pandemic caused some events to use virtual technology in place of in-person performances. Do you prefer the continuation of virtual events, or do you prefer returning to in-person events? Please elaborate. (1 of 4)**

- In person
- Both.
- Love virtual unless designated space you can socially distance
- Really enjoy virtual art classes although will also attend some in-person events
- A little of both! The convenience of virtual events makes them more accessible, but nothing replaces in-person engagement. I'd like to see some events that are in-person only, but others that have a virtual or hybrid component.
- In person please. Virtual events inevitably feel like watching tv
- prefer in person
- In-person. There is no substitute for face-to-face interactions.
- In person when possible, but virtual is not a bad option and makes some access easier and more affordable
- In person..I am a social person
- Both options are nice to have but look forward to more in person events. Outside events are a great option too.
- unsure, much as some events need to involve people, limitations put on attendees make it not possible for some
- I think the performers, event holders and instructors have done an excellent job with virtual events. From my experience, participants sometimes prefer the event to stay virtual, so it depends on the audience.

**The pandemic caused some events to use virtual technology in place of in-person performances. Do you prefer the continuation of virtual events, or do you prefer returning to in-person events? Please elaborate. (2 of 4)**

- When possible I think it would be great for events to offer a virtual option for people who can't or aren't comfortable attending in person.
- Virtual Events can be excellent. A Hybrid approach is often possible - for example, the Art Walk posts the entries online AND you can see them in person. Live events, especially for music and theatre, are much better. Many classes lend themselves to the online approach.
- virtual is a nice option for speakers or presentations esp for people without transportation or with young children
- Virtual events, allow those who can't attend in person to participate so I do like that option. In person is fun to connect directly with folks.
- I did not attend many of the events although I would prefer in person
- I really like having access to virtual events simply because they are more convenient for many people.
- Optional virtual
- mix of both
- hybrid is the way to go. that way there can be no excuses for non attendance
- Return to in-person
- in person....virtual is not the same. Never will be
- Some virtual events are acceptable but in-person events are preferable.
- There are benefits to the virtual events in some circumstances. I would like virtual events to continue.
- It's nice to have both. Also RCTV records many to air.
- I would prefer in person if and only if it can be done safely. I do think that continuing a virtual option would not only keep the arts available to everyone but offer a wider audience

**The pandemic caused some events to use virtual technology in place of in-person performances. Do you prefer the continuation of virtual events, or do you prefer returning to in-person events? Please elaborate. (3 of 4)**

- Virtual technology can enhance in-person performances by making them available to those who cannot attend.
- Virtual is better than nothing, but nothing better than in-person events
- I enjoy in-person events more, but prefer virtual when transmission is high.
- In-person due to significantly better social interaction than virtual.
- I think a combination of both. This allows those with Covid concerns to still attend.
- Depends on the event, personally i prefer plays and concerts in person but having some of the "tours" recorded and available online would be cool
- Having the remote option is nice, if available.
- Return to in person if/when safe to do so, require masks indoors, etc.
- In person. I was very very sick
- In person are preferable most of the time, but virtual should be used also if it's appropriate.
- In person. I'm so done with anything virtual.
- I prefer in person but would support virtual for those who cannot attend
- In person only
- In person is preferable if safe. But I don't mind some virtual.
- Prefer to return to in-person, but also incorporating some virtual when appropriate/necessary.
- Virtual events are important for those home bound or facing social anxiety or other mental health issues
- No, we need more in person events. Specifically for teens. There is nothing in this town for that age group.
- Mix is hood



**The pandemic caused some events to use virtual technology in place of in-person performances. Do you prefer the continuation of virtual events, or do you prefer returning to in-person events? Please elaborate. (1 of 4)**

- It really depends on the event. Some educational topics translate quite well to a virtual format, while many artistic performances do not.
- Like virtual events but in-person is preferable for most events
- In person with option for virtual
- In person is always better but virtual option is great for those with conflicts or mobility issues
- In person/ it is easy to livestream for those that choose but art is meant to be enjoyed in person
- No, live performances are best
- No prefer in person
- yes - nothing beats experiencing arts/cultural events
- Either
- I like both!
- In person but maybe remote option available, if possible, for those that would prefer it.
- In person when positive rate falls into green zone
- In person, the performances are so much more enjoyable live.
- in person if safe to do so
- Stupid Question

## What cultural events would you like to see in Reading in the coming years? (1 of 4)

- We need a permanent gallery/performance space in reading. The organizations are disjointed. There is no single entity in town advocating for the arts. As a photographer there us no organization that caters to my needs
- Community Dances
- lots more events connecting race and anti-racism to our local history.
- Concerts on the green
- looking forward to attending concerts
- more community wide celebrations
- The same as in past years - festivals, community theater, choral productions, symphonies.
- community gatherings with a focus on active involvment and participation
- Music in the park series
- Folk music by well known artists.
- Festivals outside, music, arts and crafts, food there. I love the art walk and the painting of the electrical boxes. Would love to see artists paint an item that are around. Towns have done cows for example big cows painted and displayed downtown then an auction is done for charity.
- Music concerts.
- The continuation of art, theater, dance, music and educational events that welcome and include all.
- I would love a multi cultural food event representing th3 many different cultures of residents
- More events that celebrate diversity
- Beer or Wine Fest/Tasting

## What cultural events would you like to see in Reading in the coming years? (2 of 4)

- Community art and music events, musical theatre, theatre, nature walks and talks. Events that involve the whole community, students and adults. 5K events too - walking, running events. Open houses at Parker Tavern with food and wine tasting themes. Especially outdoors events.
- Concerts by touring musicians
- n/a at this time
- Music at a central location
- I'd love to see more history things.
- International food festival
- Writing workshops, cooking classes with different cuisines, learn to do something new, learn about the history of reading, learn to use video equipment at rctv, art workshops- free or low cost to be inclusive for all residents
- Music and dance events, a poetry/storytelling series with open mic, international food based things always do well too
- Outdoor movies and performances in the summer time
- More musical events.
- More healthy events: bike parades, walks, camp outs, summer activities in the parks.
- RSO
- Jazz concerts, street fairs, parades, ice cream , frozen yogurt
- live music, theater events, play readings, art in nature, local artists and artisans focus,
- Continued Art Walk, Outdoor concerts, Perhaps an Open Studio, QP, RCS, Colonial Chorus Players, Band Concerts, Town Days.

### **What cultural events would you like to see in Reading in the coming years? (3 of 4)**

- Fireworks, street fairs, programs focusing on Reading history
- ask me again when everyone is able to attend in person, right now some of the groups/venues are still not available to all due to covid restrictions
- I would like to see arts and culture better incorporated into existing events - eg Town Day.
- More local artists, live performances of various types
- Photography + crafts. Medford has a really nice craft program that would be nice to have here
- Exhibits of various kinds, perhaps something related to history as well
- I think events promoting ethnic diversity and heritage would be great for families, like a multi cultural festival downtown, or on the grounds of RMHS fields or in the field house or library etc. School kids could make and display posters with their family heritage, vendors could be brought in to serve a variety of foods, definitely music from all over the world playing, etc. Could be large or small. Could be something to break up the winter blahs if held indoors.
- Indigenous events, I'm sick of multiculturalism, DEI, and pandering to minorities
- Would love to see more free/low-cost performance opportunities for school-age children. Also an expansion of arts offerings in the schools...perhaps a strings program.
- Art exhibits downtown. A peaceful event. Meaning no music or junk food or free giveaways that end up in landfills. Just to enjoy the beauty all around.
- Teen focused events
- The porch fest, winter festival (and other festivals like that down town)
- Beer fest. More large community gatherings like Porchfest.
- More town wide fairs, more town wide announcements of high school sports
- More outside schools

### **What cultural events would you like to see in Reading in the coming years? (3 of 4)**

- Multi-cultural fairs and speakers
- Farmers market- the one in Wakefield has diversity and opportunities for low income shoppers to buy fresh local produce
- Community Art, sculptors down town, art festival,
- English as second language events
- more opportunities for arts classes and for support in the schools
- Theatre in the park, Juneteenth celebration, Farmers Market
- More to supposed community members with disabilities and to help the community better understand disabilities
- Theater related stuff.
- A Polo Match, very thrilling event.
- cultural not political

## Other Comments and Suggestions (1 of 1)

- Thank you
- None other than it is sad to see the division in town that has only become worse. Very disappointed in the actions of those throwing words like racist and bigot around so easily. Very hard to try to those bring people in to an understanding of racism and its effects that are uneducated or unaware when that is done. Grouping people together and alleging racism is wrong and hurts the cause.
- .....
- Over 40 percent of past grants (last year and year before) went to support schools and/or seniors. Focus seems heavy on those ages. Focus seems to be on theaters, school events and seniors, although the MCC application itself says funding is intended for the arts, humanities, and sciences. More Reading based community events. More events for young adults and adults. More humanities and science events. Humanities include language, literature, philosophy, history, archaeology, anthropology, law, religion. More activity related to diversity and involving diverse cultures that exist within the community.
- thank you for your efforts
- My husband suggested strippers
- Sing-a-longs or activities that involve audience participation.
- Wokeness & feminism are a cancer in society.
- Other towns such as Lexington, Belmont and Andover seems to do a better job at getting people to turn out. The events are promoted at schools, church's and local business.
- target the young people and the seniors

**“If you would like to receive updates from us, enter your name and email address below and we will add you to the RCC email list.”**

- We had 39 responses.
- After removing irrelevant answers, such as “Yes” we had 38 responses.
- After removing emails that we already had, 28 were added to the list.